WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY – Founded December 19, 1857 DECEMBER 1978

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Acting for the officers and board of directors, I extend sincere holiday greetings to all members of the society.

It is a busy time of year for everyone. We hope, however, that many of you will be able to join us on Sunday, December 17, when our meeting will be held at the Barton Dam powerhouse. Special arrangements are being made for buses to get people there because of the lack of parking facilities for private cars at the site.

These plans are explained elsewhere as well as requests for help, special seasonal homemade cookies, and other factors needed to make our meeting a success. We hope you can be with us and that Mother Nature will cooperate better than she did for our planned maple syrup meeting last spring.

—Leigh Anderson

JOIN WCHS NOW FOR 1979; BE PART OF THE ACTION

The new year promises to be an exciting one in the Washtenaw County Historical Society as Barton powerhouse is being restored and a long-sought museum appears on its way to reality.

Membership support is more important than ever so please don't forget 1979 dues, now payable to: Mrs. Patricia Austin, treasurer, 1931 Coronada Drive, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103.

1979 dues are $5 per member, $9 for member and spouse or $4 and $7 respectively for senior citizens. Those already members of a community historical society in the county may deduct $1 from the above figures. Life membership is $100 for an individual and $150 for member and spouse. See coupon.

HELPERS NEEDED TO READY BARTON POWERHOUSE FOR SNEAK PREVIEW PARTY SUNDAY DECEMBER 17

WCHS will be "home for Christmas" if only for a makeshift sneak preview Sunday, December 17, of Barton Dam powerhouse, site of the proposed county historical museum.

Members of WCHS and community societies in the county are invited to attend the party from 2 to 4:30 p.m. An invitational preview for business and community leaders will be held from 6 to 8 p.m.

IMPORTANT: There will be no parking at the powerhouse. All visitors must go to the Great Lakes Federal Savings parking lot at Liberty and Division Streets in Ann Arbor and take a shuttle bus. The first buses will leave at 1:45 p.m.

Alloa Anderson, wife of the president, will present a 3 p.m. program on "Christmas in the Kitchen" dealing with traditional holiday treats and the stories that go with them. She is the author of *Christmas Cookies*, her own 50-year collection, published last year.

Contractors have been hurrying to complete as much work as possible by December 11 when they were to turn the powerhouse over to WCHS to clean and decorate.

Many gratifying offers of help are coming in, Hazel Proctor, co-chairman, said. Newport School Girl Scouts and the City of Ann Arbor, have offered to assist. Great Lakes Federal will loan and move furniture and microphones out there. Architect David Osler's firm will pay for the buses.

HELP of many kinds is urgently needed the week of December 11-17. Volunteers should call Co-Chairman Herb Pfabe at 663-2968. First, years of dust must be washed off artifacts recently moved from Tuomy House barn.

Help is needed with electrical arrangements, music (background and/or live performance), clearing walks, decorating, refreshments and clean-up. Electrical connections are needed for tree lights, microphones and spotlights for the museum model.

Loan or donation of Christmas tree lights, extension cords and decorations is sought. Members are asked to donate Christmas cookies. If anyone can't go but wishes to donate cookies, please call Wilma Steketee, refreshments chairman, at 662-4025. Otherwise please bring them with you to the party.

TOPIC TO BE ANNOUNCED

The January program will be announced in the next issue of *Washtenaw Impressions.* Arrangements had not been completed at press time.

ETHNIC CHRISTMAS EVENTS SLATED AT KEMPF HOUSE

Holiday happenings are planned at Kempf House in cooperation with the Multi-Ethnic Alliance. The house was to be decorated by the Ann Arbor Garden Club.

Wystan Stevens, city historian, will give two noontime slide shows at the Ann Arbor Public Library. The first Friday, December 15, on Ann Arbor's ethnic background, will be followed by a Tappan Junior High French Club bake sale at Kempf House until 5 p.m.

The second on the old West Side will be Tuesday, December 19, followed by an old West Side bake sale at Kampf House until 5 p.m.

Saturday, the 16th, members of the Polish-American Alliance will be on hand 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Kempf House in ethnic costumes to share stories, holiday customs and treats. The German Society will do likewise on Monday the 18th. The house will be closed the 17th.

POSTAL COVERS TELL OF:

Early Annarbour, Thrifty Postmasters, Clerk Who Carved Place in Postal History

The ink is faded. They have no stamps but a rate mark, "25", written in the upper right corner. They were sent from "Annarbour" or "Ann Arbour" in 1827 and 1828.

They are the earliest "covers" in the collection of Dr. Frank Whitehouse, Jr., a philatelist specializing in Ann Arbor postal history. He exhibited his collection and showed slides of early postal covers at the November WCHS meeting.

The slides were a gift from the widow of Robert H. Schoen of Saginaw. The late Mr. Schoen had a large collection on Washtenaw County postal history, some of which Dr. Whitehouse purchased.

Earlier this year Dr. Whitehouse was instrumental in obtaining an even earlier letter for the Michigan Historical Collections in the U-M Bentley Library. John Allen sent it from Ann Arbour early in 1825 only months after he founded the city.

It went to Allen's aunt, Jane Trimble, in Ohio and described early Ann Arbor. Presumably Mrs. Trimble had to pay the 18½¢ postage, a not insignificant sum when the government was selling land for $1.25 an acre. Few letters then were sent prepaid and were marked "paid" if so. Unclaimed letters were advertised in the newspaper.

Most early letters used one sheet of paper, letter on the inside and the blank back of the sheet folded to make a cover. Two sheets or an envelope, not used until later, would have cost double. However the one sheet might be a fairly large one—in one case the letter is in Bentley Library and Dr. Whitehouse has the portion of the sheet used as a cover in his collection.

John Allen was the first postmaster from 1824 to 1829 along with his other activities. Dr. Whitehouse says, "I'm going to do a paper some day entitled 'Who Was Minding the Store?' because John Allen wasn't, based on handwriting variations I've observed. I'm wondering if Ann Allen or someone he assigned his duty or James Allen did it."

The founder's brother, James T. Allen, was postmaster from January 29, 1829, to October 16, 1833, when Anson Brown, the developer of Lower Town, succeeded in getting himself named postmaster and moving the post office to his part of town.

Original cork prints

"There's a wonderful letter in the Lucius Lyons papers in the Clements Library from Anson Brown to Lyons saying how we good fellows of the same party really ought to stick together and I really need to have the post office in Lower Town and don't you think we can do something about it. Politics remain the same," he commented.

While the Lyons papers contain many territorial covers, Dr. Whitehouse believes that his collection of 11 Ann Arbour territorial covers is the largest in private hands.

The post office did not remain long in Lower Town and Brown was succeeded by Charles Thayer as postmaster from 1834 to 1841.

During the territorial period letters were generally addressed to "Ann Arbour, Mic. Ty.". Sometimes the name of the town was run together in one word, sometimes "Ter." might be used for territory. Judging by Dr. Whitehouse's covers, the "u" in "Arbour" began to be dropped in the 1830's.

About the time Michigan became a state in 1837, there appeared in Ann Arbor a town and date stamp with serif-style type. A second type of circular town and date stamp came into use in 1847. A cover illustrating that was sent to "Michigan, Michigan". From April 27, 1847, to April 3, 1848, the state's capital was called "Michigan" before it was named "Lansing". Another cover was sent to "Jacksonburgh" as Jackson was once called.

A letter from Senator Alpheus Felch shows that then as now the senator's letter was "free". His signature appears in the upper right corner along with "free" in writing. It was also stamped "free". (Felch Park in front of Power Center is named for the senator.)

About 1847 envelopes came into use because they cost no more and the government issued its first postage stamps, apparently in limited supply. Ann Arbor got none for the first two years. In the next three years through 1851 the Ann Arbor post office sold only $130 worth of five and ten cent stamps although the volume of mail was much greater. No covers from Ann Arbor of those first ten cent stamps are known, he said.

The post office used different colors of inks for the town and date stamp, he noted, red, then black for a very short time, then bright blue. Postal historians have postulated that there must have been a traveling salesman selling different colors in turn because Detroit changed color about the same time Ann Arbor did.

In 1855 the Ann Arbor post office started to use another town and date stamp which had a break in its circle almost from the beginning. The slides illustrated the gradual deterioration of the stamp until it was finally rimless on March 31, 1863.

A cover from a few days later shows a new double circle cancellation with the year slug upside down. (Oops, printing errors bedevil even postal clerks.) Even

right side up the year was hard to read and beginning in 1868 no year was used, only a blank slug appearing as a black bar. A single circle stamp was adopted in December 1876 with no year. Lack of the year in the cancellation caused some difficulties, even lawsuits.

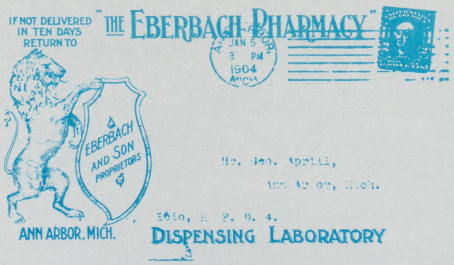
(An 1876 cover with the double circle cancellation in Dr. Whitehouse's collection is addressed to "Miss Maddie Stockwell" in Kalamazoo. Six years earlier Madelon Stockwell had entered that masculine bastion of higher education, The University of Michigan, as its first woman student. One may wonder if residents of Stockwell Hall on campus today ever think of her as "Maddie".)

In 1857 the first perforated stamps were issued and postal envelopes with imprinted stamps came into use. Prior to that post offices received sheets of stamps which had to be cut. Some were badly trimmed, some have nice wide margins and are prized by collectors.

Thrifty early postmasters used the metal canceler until it was rimless, as mentioned above. Dr. Whitehouse's covers also show that they shaved away part of the "zero" of 1860 to serve as a somewhat misshapen "1" for 1861. Again in 1898, they cut away part of the second "8" to make it do for 1899.

At the time of the Civil War the current stamps were demonetized so the Confederates couldn't use them and new stamps issued. He showed a grilled 1861 issue red George Washington stamp, an attractive blue three-cent locomotive stamp of 1869 which was not popular for some reason, probably politics, and an 1870 green three cent stamp. (The grilled stamp was actually processed something like a cube steak, so it would take in the cancellation ink, he explained.)

During the Civil War patriotic envelopes came into style with flags and variations—one shows a tree thick with flags like apples on every twig.


IF NOT DELIVERED IN TEN DAYS RETURN TO
THE EBERBACH PHARMACY
EBERBACH AND SON PROPRIETORS
ANN ARBOR, MICH.
DISPENSING LABORATORY

All illustrations from Dr. Whitehouse collection

A 1904 Ann Arbor cover from Eberbach Pharmacy to Mr. George Aprill of Scio R.F.D. 4.

Other illustrations also came into use on envelopes. He showed examples of U-M classes of 1862, 1872, 1873 and 1875. After the Civil War advertising came into use,

The 1870's and 1880's were a classic period for fancy cancellations, he said. At that time post office personnel created a wide variety of fancy stamp cancellations to prevent reuse of stamps before more prosaic cancelling devices were adopted.

Most were carved corks and stamped by hand. They deteriorated rapidly but the evidence remains on covers and Ann Arbor is famous for them, particularly those of Harry Cox Nickels.

Postmaster Jerome C. Knowlton hired Nickels, 19, as a clerk in January 1884, the year before he entered The University of Michigan dental school.

Not lacking in ego, the young clerk used his own name and initials in his designs and in one case "Berry" apparently commemorating a friend. Perhaps Nickel's best known cancel was "IAM HN"

A later clerk, Charles Bender, used his initials and a horseshoe. Not all their cancellations were fancy, some were plain "cross-roads" designs. One apparent design, a black circle with two

A 1904 Ann Arbor cover featuring local brewery, with red two-cent George Washington stamp.

white holes which one dealer tried to sell as a "jack 'o lantern" cancel was really made by a two-hole cork familiar to laboratory researchers, Dr. Whitehouse says. Real "jack o' lantern" cancels have more detail.

At one time or another, Washtenaw County has had a number of small post offices. Dr. Whitehouse showed a cover for the Walsh Post Office, backstamped on its receipt in Ann Arbor.

Walsh Post Office, seven miles north of Ann Arbor, was established July 18, 1881. Postmaster William M. Walsh hauled the mail until it was discontinued January 13, 1885.

Dr. Whitehouse also has a variety of other covers—postage dues, railroad cancels, one carried around the world by Ann Pelegreno in 1967 when she retraced the Amelia Earhart route, even current political covers—the kind many of us threw in the wastebasket a few weeks ago after the fall election.

All are part of the postal history of Ann Arbor about which he hopes to write a book someday soon.

U.S. POSTAL RATES

1816-1845 for a single sheet of paper, no envelope, were:

Under 30 miles	.06
30-80 miles	.10
80-150 miles	.12½
150-400 miles	.18½ or 18¾*
400 or more miles	.25

*changed to .18¾ in 1825

1845 (as a result of popular agitation) for a single sheet:

Up to 300 miles	.05
300 or more miles	.10
"Drop rate" (same city)	.02

1851

Any distance, prepaid	.03
Not prepaid	.05

1855

Mandatory prepaid	.03

1883

Any distance	.02

World War I

Any distance	.03

Drop rate bounced back and forth between one and two cents over the period.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society — 8 p.m. Monday, January 8, at McKune Memorial Library.

Dexter Historical Society — "Fat Bob" Taylor will again lead the Christmas Sing at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, December 16, at the museum. Spiced hot cider and cookies will be served. It is open to the public.

The museum will not be open January through March except by special appointment which may be made by calling the museum number to be published in the new telephone directory. (It will ring in at a member's home.)

Milan Historical Society — 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 20, at Milan Community House.

Saline Historical Society — 8 p.m. Tuesday, January 16, at high school library. Mrs. Marty Fischer who lives in a Queen Anne style home in Saline and has decorated it with antiques will discuss decorating older homes.

Ypsilanti Historical Society — All city Christmas party 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, December 17, at museum. Wesleyan Bellringers from the Methodist Church will play songs on handbells at 4 p.m. An organist will play carols. Refreshments will be served.

The Ypsilanti Garden Club was to decorate the museum tree this year, while YHS will otherwise "deck the halls".

TICKETS GOOD FOR FIVE BATHS $1.00.
RUB BATHS 25 CENTS EXTRA.
GENTLEMEN:
When through Bathing will please let the Water out. Also, where others are waiting to limit the time of their use of the Rooms to
ONE-HALF HOUR.
C. J. SHETTERLY, Prop.
IMPROPER LANGUAGE NOT ALLOWED.

Before there was a bathtub or two in every house, some barbershops offered baths. This sign, presented to WCHS by Mr. and Mrs. Warren Galloway, once hung in a shop they believe was located on the west side of Main between Huron and Ann Streets in Ann Arbor in the early 1900's.

U-M, THREE HELPERS MOVE WCHS RELICS

Special thanks are due to the University of Michigan which furnished three trucks and a lowboy with drivers and to Robert Lacy, John Proctor and David Braun for helping move that portion of WCHS collections stored in the Tuomy House barn out to Barton Powerhouse recently.

COMMERCIAL MEMBERSHIPS ESTABLISHED BY SOCIETY

Local businesses may now join WCHS with a special commercial membership adopted by the board. They have a choice of categories: Patron, $100 a year; Sponsor, $75; Donor, $50; and Friend, $25. See coupon.

HOWARD PARR ELECTED BY MANCHESTER SOCIETY

Howard Parr is the new president of the Manchester Historical Society succeeding Elizabeth Grossman who will serve as vice-president. Hazel Kappler is secretary and David Little, treasurer. Robert Roth and Mrs. Duane Beuerle were elected to the board.

LOIS MOORE HEADS CHELSEA SOCIETY

Lois Moore is the new president of the Chelsea Historical Society succeeding Gwen Schrader. Sandy Holmes is vice-president; Marie Petsch, secretary; and Max Hepburn, treasurer. Elected to the board are Harold Jones, a life member, Sally Nicola and Jan Ferrero.

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS MEETING

2 to 4:30 P.M.
Sunday, December 17, 1978
Barton Powerhouse

Go by shuttle bus only from
Great Lakes Federal Savings Parking Lot
Liberty at Division

NO PARKING at site.

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 96
Ann Arbor, Mich.